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The Life & Labours of
Saint John Baptist
de la Salle



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de la Salle

Founder of the Brothers
of the Christian Schools

By Francis Thompson

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'Health and Holiness,' and
'The Hound of Heaven'



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Preface.

IN the Spring of 1891, FRANCIS THOMPSON undertook, mainly at the instance of Brother JUSTIN, the task of writing for the pages of an English Magazine this Biography of JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.

Out of print for many years, it is now re-issued separately to meet a demand not wholly confined to his immediate spiritual family. Signs are not wanting that a wider public has a welcome for this sketch of the founder of Free Elementary Schools, the pioneer of Technical Education, the inventor of the Object Lesson, the framer of Free Libraries, and the early advocate of Sunday Schools.

The book was intended to make appeal in particular to those youths who, having no vocation to the Priesthood, yet desire to lead a dedicated life. To be the sons of him who forestalled, in the France of

over two centuries ago, the Educational Reformers in the England and the New World of to-day, is no mean calling. Many thousands of Brothers in Europe, in America, and in the Colonies, already form an army to which a Divine conscription brings daily recruits.

The “pedestrian prose” in which the main story is designedly told is abandoned by the teller in his last chapter. There he breaks into a run and a leap, and, after long constraint, throws up, as it were, his cap, which turns out to be besides the Red Cap of a Cardinal and of Liberty!

W. M.

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The Life & Labours of Saint John Baptist de la Salle.

CHAPTER I.

De la Salle's Early Life and Vocation.

WHAT did Jean Baptiste de la Salle? He founded an Order of Schoolmasters, a Congregation which ennobles and glorifies the teacher's calling by making it an exercise of religion.

Association is the method of the day. Whatever we wish to do, we associate to achieve our aim. And this Institute of Saint de la Salle is a Society to cultivate—very literally to cultivate—that important little figure whom a poet has called the New Hero: to cultivate him, not in the too facile and luxurious way of sentimentalising over him, but by the patient, thankless, scarce valued, yet most invaluable method of training him; to safeguard the happiness of the child by a means more necessary than protecting him against employers—by protecting him against himself.

With what pre-eminent effectiveness the members of Saint John Baptist de la Salle's Institute do this, its history will display better than any eulogy of mine.

If I call de la Salle the Founder of Free Education, it would be a mistake therefore to suppose that none had attempted anything like the work of the Brothers of the Christian Schools before him. Yet it is quite possible that the man to whom we more remotely owe Primary Education was, after all, a friend of St. Vincent de Paul, M. Bourdoise, who only prayed. He wrote as follows to M. Olier : " I wish we could have a school filled with the supernatural spirit, where children might learn to read and write, and also be trained into good parishioners. For to see money spent on teaching them merely to read and write, without making them better Christians, is a real pity, and yet this is generally what happens. Nowadays all classes of children go to schools, but to schools where all is materialism. We must not, therefore, be surprised if afterwards they do not lead Christian lives ; for, in order to have a school useful to Christianity, one must have masters who will labour there like perfect Christians, and not like hirelings, regarding the office as a miserable trade, taken up to earn their

bread. For my part, I declare from my heart, that I would willingly beg from door to door, to procure the means of living for a *real* schoolmaster ; and, like St. Francis Xavier, I would implore all the Universities for men—not to go off to Japan and the Indies to convert the infidel, but to begin this excellent work. It is easy enough to find amongst the clergy men ready to take a curacy or a parish ; but to find anyone with piety and the other qualities necessary to keep a school, having also the means of living, and being yet willing to work under the authority of the pastor, this is very rare indeed. Whence I conclude that to devote oneself to forming such masters is a work more useful to the Church, and more meritorious, than to preach all one's life in the pulpits of the largest towns of the kingdom. I believe that a priest who had the science of the Saints would be a schoolmaster, and would be canonised for it."

And, with a kindling vision—perhaps too a prevision—of future schoolmasters for God, he continues : " The best masters, the greatest, the most esteemed—the Doctors of the Sorbonne—would not be too good for the office. Because the parish schools are poor, and taught by poor men, people imagine they are nothing. And yet they are a chief means of destroying

vice and instilling virtue. I believe that, if St. Paul and St. Denis were to come to France now, they would undertake the work of school-masters in preference to any other. For fifty-seven years I have been familiar with the work of a field-labourer ; and during all that time I have seen no work more futile than that of sowing in ground that had not previously been well manured and ploughed. Now, it is by means of Christian schools that hearts are prepared to receive the Word of God from preachers. The school is the Novitiate of Christianity. It is the seminary of seminaries."

On March 15th, 1649, this Frenchman founded an association of intercession, all whose members were bound to prayer that God would grant to France Christian teachers for the children of the Poor. Its numbers speedily became very great ; and, two years after it was instituted, on April 30th, 1651, was born, at Rheims, Jean Baptiste de la Salle.

His parents were of noble lineage, and their piety, doubtless, contributed to foster in him the ecclesiastical spirit he displayed from very early years. At the age of only eleven he received the tonsure ; at sixteen, by one of the crying abuses of the age, he became a Canon of the Cathedral of Rheims. An old relative

resigned his canonry in the youth's favour. Young de la Salle pursued his studies, however, with exemplary fidelity ; and in one sense his canonry was well for him, since his parents died when he was twenty, leaving to him the charge of his younger brothers—a charge which would have been incompatible with the duties of a parish priest. He distinguished himself in his theological studies, and finally took his degree of D.D. with honour. He exhibited no attraction towards what was to be his life-work, and his first attention was called to school affairs by his friend, Canon Roland, who was connected with an orphanage to which were attached free schools for girls. Dying, he left the care of the Institution, and the Community of Religious women in charge of it, to de la Salle. But after conscientiously discharging these duties, de la Salle resumed his former retired life.

It was an accident which inveigled rather than led him into the work for which he was destined. A certain lady of Rouen, who from a worldly life had been suddenly converted to a life of penance and charity, had assisted the Community confided by Canon Roland to de la Salle. She was anxious to provide some institution of the kind for boys in Rheims, where she had been born. She chose for this purpose a devout

and enterprising layman named Nyel, who had all his life been devoted to the cause of the instruction of the Poor, and besought him to found a school in Rheims. For this purpose she made him a yearly allowance, and gave him a letter of introduction to de la Salle, who happened to be her relative. De la Salle received him, befriended him, and the school was started in the parish of St. Maurice. The result was that a lady in the parish of St. James conceived a wish to found a similar school for her own parish, and de la Salle was reluctantly drawn into befriending it as he had done the first. There were five masters attached to the two schools, and M. Nyel was so frequently absent, in the endeavour to found fresh undertakings, that insensibly de la Salle acquired the habit of looking after them.

They lived in the house of the Curé of St. Maurice's, which was so small as to put them to great discomfort. De la Salle engaged for them a house near his own, sent them food regularly from his own kitchen, and drew up for them a little rule of life, calling on them now and again to see that it was observed. He insensibly acquired an interest in his *protégés*, whose goodwill he admired, though his refined nature was repelled by their coarseness of

manners. It ended in his inviting them to his own table, instead of sending them their food ; and gradually, perceiving the good effected in them by his influence, and how many things there still remained to reform in them, he was led to think of receiving them altogether into his own house. The idea was distasteful to his delicate nature ; he feared the dissatisfaction of his friends and relatives. He went to Paris and consulted Father Barré, a man who had himself attempted the direction of boys' schools, and had done much for girls' education. His attempts with boys, however, had failed ; he had been unable to maintain the control of the masters. When he heard de la Salle's case, he perceived that he had before him a man qualified for the task in which he had been unsuccessful. His advice was decisive. De la Salle returned to Rheims with the fixed resolve to embrace the task of training these schoolmasters according to his own ideals of the vocation which they had embraced. He received them all into his house.

The storm which he had foreseen followed. Two out of his three brothers, who had hitherto lived under his roof, quitted him. He drew up a rule of devotions for the men whom he had received into his house, and subjected them to

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careful discipline ; with the not unnatural result that all but two of the unhappy schoolmasters, who in becoming teachers had not bargained for becoming monks, followed the footsteps of his departed brothers. However, presently, fresh candidates presented themselves, knowing beforehand the conditions exacted of them. The new comers proved to be picked and excellent men for his purpose : by gentle and tactful insinuation he gradually imbued them with the habits of religious discipline which it was his purpose to foster in them. At this point he gave up his paternal home and hired a more retired house at the entrance of the Rue Neuve (now Rue Gambetta), whither he removed what was now virtually his infant Community.

The fame of de la Salle's work spread, and various neighbouring places began to ask him for schoolmasters, so that his new undertaking began seriously to interfere with his duties as Canon. The masters grew afraid of the future. They asked themselves what would be their lot when they grew old and infirm. They contrasted the secure future of the rich Canon whom they had accepted as Superior with their own precarious state. And the Canon determined to resign his canonry. At first his Director opposed him, telling him to wait. But when

some months' waiting failed to soften his Director, he once more went to Paris and consulted Father Barré.

Before Father Barré's approval the Director finally gave way. Then came the opposition of his friends, of his fellow Canons, of his Superiors, of the Archbishop of Rheims himself ; but over all de la Salle finally triumphed. There remained his private fortune, which, after a year's opposition, his Director consented to his casting after the canonry. The only question with him was whether he should use it to endow his Community. Father Barré was against endowment, which he thought lowered the vital energy of a Community. "*Si vous fondez, vous fondrez,*" he said. So thought de la Salle ; but he did not decide till he had consulted God by prayer, and his prayer, in its simple directness, is so characteristic as to be worth giving : " My God, I do not know whether to endow or not to endow. It is not for me to found Communities nor to know how to establish them. It is for Thee, my God, to know and to do it in the way that pleases Thee. If Thou endowest them they will be well endowed ; if Thou dost not endow them they will be without endowment. I pray Thee, O my God, to make known Thy will to me."

In the event, he determined to give his fortune

to the poor. And that year (1684) came a famine throughout Champagne. He literally sold all he possessed and gave it to the starving people. The distribution lasted for two years, and when it was over he was so absolutely poor that, having to journey to Rethel to consult the Duc de Mazarin, he begged his food along the way, and once he had difficulty in getting a piece of black bread from an old woman. Indeed, henceforth he led the life of an ascetic. His delicate digestion rejected the coarser food of those with whom he had elected to live on equal terms. He conquered fastidiousness by starving himself until sheer hunger made him willing to eat any food. He at last became unconscious of what he ate. The cook once mistakenly served up a dish of wormwood, from which the Brothers all turned. De la Salle alone finished his portion, unaware that anything was wrong. Prayer he practised incessantly; at Rheims on every Friday he made the sacristan lock him in the Church of St. Rémi, and there he spent the night in vigil.

His character soon began to attract postulants to his house, both working men and men of gentle birth, so that it seemed to him necessary to discuss the question of Rules for the young Institute. The discussion took place

between himself and the twelve elder of his followers after a Retreat ; and, though a certain common agreement on essential points was reached, the final drawing up of any fixed code was deferred. It was resolved that they should take the three monastic vows for three years only, and renew them every year. This was for the selected twelve. The other members were to be bound only by the vow of obedience for one year, and to renew it yearly until their vocation was beyond doubt. The wisdom of de la Salle in these cautious proceedings was made manifest by the fact that of the chosen twelve, four abstained from renewing their vows the next year. The name—Brothers of the Christian Schools—was now decided on. The question of a habit was left to the Superior, who was guided in his choice by accident. When winter came the Mayor advised him to give his followers a large cloak with hanging sleeves, called a *capote*, which was very generally worn in Champagne as a protection against the weather. De la Salle followed the advice, and clothed them in a *soutane* without belt, thick double-soled shoes, a broad-brimmed hat, and for outer garment the *capote*, made long in common black stuff.

In the ensuing years, from 1681 to 1688, several of the Brothers died, and de la Salle

made the first of a series of attempts to give up the Superiorship. He actually succeeded for a time, inducing the Brothers to elect one of their number in his place. But, as soon as the fact became known outside, the Archiepiscopal Grand Vicar went to the house and ordered de la Salle to resume his post.

The next step in the constitution of his Congregation—the establishment of a Junior Novitiate—came about, like the earlier steps, without apparent design. A lad of fifteen begged for admission, and seemed so zealous that de la Salle yielded to his request. Three more followed, and as they were manifestly too young to bear the full strictness of his Rule, he placed them in an adjoining house, communicating with his own by a single door, where, in charge of an experienced Brother, they lived under a modified Rule and without the Habit.

The clergy of the country parishes about Rheims began to follow the example of the towns in applying to him for masters. He had none to spare ; moreover, a country parish could supply neither work nor support for more than a single master, and it was his rule always to place two Brothers in charge of a school, in order to avoid the dangers of solitude. In this extremity the country clergy sent him from

their parishes young men of good character, and requested him to train them after the model of his own Brothers (so far as was possible) for the work of teaching. He undertook the task, established them in a separate house, gave them a Rule of life appropriate to their condition as laymen, and, when they were adequately trained, sent them back to teach the village schools.

This was the first Normal School for lay teachers, an institution revived in modern times and under modern conditions by Brother William of Jesus.

CHAPTER II.

The Growth of the Institute.

So far, de la Salle's Congregation had been limited in its sphere of work and recognition to the district about its birthplace—Rheims. Its scope was now extended to Paris. He was under an old-standing promise to M. de la Barmondière, the Curé of St. Sulpice, to open a school in that parish, and at this time (February, 1688) he was called upon to fulfil it. The saintly M. Olier had started seven free schools in St. Sulpice; but, as in many other enterprises of the kind, here again the lack of good masters caused them, after their Founder's death, to decay, until but one of the seven remained. This too was clearly going the way of the other six. The children were beyond the control of the Abbé Compagnon, who was in charge of it; and, after some preliminary negotiations, M. de la Barbondière requested de la Salle to undertake its management.

De la Salle set out at once with two companions, and soon made the school so successful that two more Brothers were sent for from

Rheims, and a second school was opened in the parish. Then persecution began, first on the part of his predecessor, the Abbé Compagnon, and then on the part of the lay schoolmasters, who were alarmed by the competition of the free schools. But he successfully lightened these attacks, and, returning to Rheims, left Brother l'Heureux in charge of the Parisian schools.

An important feature in the future character of the Institute indirectly resulted from this. Brother l'Heureux he intended for his successor, and was arranging to have him ordained, that a priest might succeed a priest in the Superiorship. Moreover, he designed that each House should have one Brother in Holy Orders to perform for it all religious functions. But at this time Brother l'Heureux died. De la Salle took the event as a kind of admonition. For the first time he realised the probable consequences of mingling lay and clerical Brothers. He perceived the possibility of consequent jealousy from such an introduction of caste; that, as had happened before in teaching bodies composed of ecclesiastics, clerical pursuits would draw the brethren away from the humble drudgery of educating ignorant children. At a single stroke he imposed on his Institute that self-

denying abstinence from the honour of the Priesthood which has ever since preserved it for the cause of Education and the Poor. He ruled that no Brother should ever receive ordination, and that no Priest be admitted to the ranks of the Institute.

During his absence in Paris, things went badly with the Congregation in Rheims and the neighbourhood. The Brother left in charge mis-managed; half the brethren deserted the Community in consequence; the country clergy, who believed only in de la Salle himself, sent no more schoolmasters for education, and the Normal School (if one may give it so modern a name) was closed. The health of some of the Brothers was failing, and the fervour of many. This led to the establishment of the first House at the village of Vaugirard, near Paris. Here de la Salle himself took up his abode for seven years, and he made it a House of Retreat for recruiting both the physical and the spiritual health of the Brothers. There they spent their holidays; thither they came in sickness; thither too they all came once a year to make a Retreat and follow the exercises of the Novitiate. It served also as a home for novices. At this period it was that he chose two of his followers as assistants, to be more closely

associated with himself and to aid him with their counsel.

In 1693 a famine caused a temporary removal from Vaugirard to Paris ; and, after the return of the Brothers to Vaugirard, de la Salle at length, believing them now sufficiently chastened and confirmed, allowed the Brothers to make their vows perpetual. Now also he formally drew up the Rule of the Institute, after placing it in the hands of the Brothers, that they might suggest any alterations they thought fit. During this same period of quiet he compiled his admirable "Manual for the use of the Christian Schools," which, re-edited to keep it abreast of the times, has been the guide of the Christian Brothers ever since. What a monument of educational sagacity it is, can hardly be appreciated without a knowledge of the state of things which obtained before de la Salle. For instance : astonishing as it seems, he was absolutely the first to introduce class teaching. Until he appeared, each child had been called up in turn and taught separately. Hence an inevitable multiplicity of schools and masters, adding to the difficulty arising from the fewness of competent teachers.

By 1698 the first house at Vaugirard had become too small for the rapidly increasing

Community. Through the support of M. de la Chétardie, who had succeeded M. de la Barmondière at St. Sulpice, and the generosity of a rich widow, Madame Voisin, he was enabled to take a larger house near Paris, which he most appropriately dedicated to St. Cassianus, the martyred schoolmaster. One of the Brothers he made Master of Novices, another Superintendent of the Parisian schools; and, thus relieved of some of his many responsibilities, began a fresh extension of educational activity.

A new school was opened in the parish of St. Sulpice, where increased prestige was brought him by the attention of James II, the exiled King of England. Requiring an instructor for the sons of his Irish adherents, the King consulted the Archbishop of Paris, who placed the matter in the hands of M. de la Chétardie; and the Curé of St. Sulpice recommended M. de la Salle. De la Salle agreed to accept the task, and fifty young Irish gentlemen were placed under his direction. They required, of course, higher education than that which the Christian Schools were accustomed to impart; and therefore de la Salle himself assisted in their education. King James himself subsequently visited the school, and was of course

delighted with the manners and progress of the young boarders.

Then followed a further innovation in education, when de la Salle founded the first Sunday School in France. It was designed for lads under twenty, belonging to the artisan and tradesman class. Since he chiefly founded it as a remedy against the evil employment of the Sunday, he wished it to be attractive ; and therefore, in addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic, he gave the youths who attended it the opportunity of pursuing studies useful in the higher developments of their own callings ; studies such as mechanics, mathematics, and drawing. Two Brothers were specially educated to conduct this Sunday school, at the close of which there were always religious instructions and exercises. It soon became so popular that it was attended by two hundred lads. Unfortunately, the Brothers educated for it took advantage of their special training to quit the Institute and open paying classes of their own. The consequent closing of the school, however, was only temporary : as soon as another Brother could be trained for the purpose, it was reopened, and obtained all its former success. This was, as I have said, the first Sunday School in France : in Holland such institutions were

already known; and, of course, Sunday Schools for religious teaching had before been set up in Milan by St. Charles Borromeo.

Following on this, he established in the parish of St. Hippolyte a Normal School for training country schoolmasters; such a School as that which he had established at Rheims, and which had lapsed during his absence. He placed it under the direction of Brother Nicholas Vuyart, one of the two Brothers whom he had chosen at Vaugirard as his special confidants. Unfortunately, Brother Vuyart, like Judas, succumbed to the temptation of holding the money-bag. Following the example of the first Sunday School teachers, he quitted the Institute, and continued the class on his own account. This was the end of the Normal School under the old *régime*; the time was not ripe for it, and it was left for a modern Superior of the Congregation successfully to revive de la Salle's idea, now universally realised.

Yet more trouble was in store for the Founder from his own disciples. The Brother whom he had made Master of Novices was guilty of excessive severity to his subjects, who complained to M. de la Chétardie, de la Salle being away on business. The Brother who had been made Director of the Parisian schools followed

in the footsteps of the Novice-master, and harshly penanced a novice who was studying in the schools. This novice likewise complained to the Curé of St. Sulpice. Now, M. de la Chétardie was becoming ill-satisfied with the Founder's administration of the Society, and hastily laid these severities to the account of the Rule, not of the two Brothers who administered the Rule. He sent to the Archbishop of Paris a statement which gravely impugned de la Salle's discretion in managing the Institute. The Archbishop ordered his Vicar - General, M. Pirot, to make inquiries. The inquiries were answered by the Brothers favourably to the Superior and the Rule, though the two directors were blamed ; but, urged by outside influences, M. Pirot reported against the Founder.

When de la Salle next called on the Archbishop, he was suddenly and quietly told : "Sir, you are no longer Superior of your Community ; I have provided it with another." De la Salle, after his usual fashion, withdrew in silence, and passively awaited results. M. Pirot sent him private word when the new Superior was to be installed. De la Salle feared resistance from the Brothers if they were apprised beforehand, and so merely desired them to assemble on the assigned day, without stating any reason. Let

de la Salle's chief biographer, M. Armand Ravelet, tell in his own words the unusual scene which followed :

“ On the first Sunday of Advent, 1702, all the Brothers of Paris were collected in the large house. A hall had been prepared and decorated. The Brothers were wondering who would be the high personage that was expected, and what ceremony he was going to preside over. Blessed de la Salle, cheerful and smiling as usual, superintended everything. At four o'clock, after Vespers, a coach stopped at the door. The Vicar-General, M. Pirot, alighted, accompanied by a young Abbé. M. de la Salle received him with due honour, and conducted him to the seat that had been prepared for him. His companion sat down beside him, and the bell rang to call in the Brothers, who were all curiosity as to what was to happen. When silence reigned in the hall, M. Pirot opened speech.

“ Accustomed to address audiences that were often hard to manage, and foreseeing resistance, he proceeded cautiously, and began by extolling de la Salle, proclaiming him the man chosen by God to found the work, and carry it to its present point. He spoke of his virtues, the labours he had undergone, the services he had rendered ; and was lavish of praise. The Brothers listened with delight while their beloved Father was spoken of in these terms, and drowned M. Pirot's voice at intervals with their bursts of applause. But suddenly the tone changed, the orator turned from Blessed de la Salle to the strange companion he had brought

with him, and began his panegyric. M. Briscot, whom he had the pleasure of introducing to them, was a young priest from Lyons, full of virtues and merit ; he trusted they would obey him in all things, for he was worthy of their esteem and confidence. The Brothers, at first surprised and mystified by this discourse about a stranger, pricked up their ears, and began to see through its meaning. The moment they perceived what the orator was about, one of the principal among them, unable to contain himself, advanced respectfully to M. Pirot, and informed him, in the name of all, that they already had a Superior, and begged that he would not think of giving them another. Mr. Pirot, quite unmoved, waved him aside with a gesture of his hand, and, resuming his discourse, went on to speak with precision of the order he had to execute, and of the duty on their side to obey it. It was, in fact, a formal command.

“ Then began the tumult. ‘ M. de la Salle is our only Superior ; we will have no other ! ’ cry out the Brothers and novices in chorus ; and they add that the Archbishop must have been deceived, otherwise he never would have come to a decision so contrary to justice and to their unanimous desire. The holy Founder, grieved by this resistance, raised his voice to quiet the uproar, and reminded the Brothers of their promises to him. In virtue of that authority vested in him, he requested them to submit to the order conveyed to them, and not set an example of obstinacy and rebellion. Under other circumstances his words would have had their immediate effect ; but the Brothers had now strong reasons to oppose to them, and

they spoke them out boldly. . . . M. Pirot ought to have seen at once the mistake he had made, and withdrawn. But the battle had begun, and self-love was up in arms. . . . He took out the Archbishop's orders, sealed with his seal, and read them. This deed, in which were set forth the so-called misdemeanours of Blessed de la Salle, increased the tumult. The Brothers could not contain their indignation against those who had traduced their Superior, and they appealed from the Archbishop duped to the Archbishop possessed of the truth.

“The Master of Novices, whose imprudent direction had brought about the complaints, interfered in his turn, and began loudly to defend his Superior; but he only drew upon himself the wrath of M. Pirot, who looked on him as the author of the unpleasant position in which he (M. Pirot) found himself. He silenced him rudely. ‘What! you dare to speak, you who are the primary cause of all this scandal, and unworthy of the post you hold!’ The unlucky Brother held his peace and withdrew. But there was another person present, who was to the full as embarrassed. This was M. Bricot, who had come there to be solemnly installed, and who, instead of the honours he anticipated, got nothing but snubs. It was plain that nobody had the least intention of obeying him, and the discussion was only increasing the antipathy of the Brothers for a Superior who was being forced upon them. M. Bricot felt he was playing a ridiculous part while his rights and titles were being fought over. He endeavoured to put an end to the scene by begging M. Pirot to leave the Brothers their Superior, adding

that, for his part, he would never consent to take the keys of a house where the hearts were closed against him. The conflict lasted a long time. The Brothers would not yield, and M. Pirot would not own himself beaten.

“But the one who suffered most of all was M. de la Salle. This public testimony of esteem and affection from his disciples hurt his humility. The rebellion distressed him. Besides this, the hopes he had cherished of being relieved of his burden, and of consecrating the rest of his days to solitude and prayer, were again disappointed. He did not despair, however, of bringing the Brothers round in time ; and when he was accompanying M. Pirot to the door, he told him so. But the Brothers overheard the remark, and at once flatly contradicted him. ‘Our determination is bound up with our vow,’ they declared ; ‘in keeping to the one, we feel that we are being faithful to the other. We will have no Superior but our Father. If another is forced upon us, let that other bring new subjects with him, for we are all resolved to walk out of the house.’”

De la Salle hastened away to throw himself at the feet of the Archbishop, and crave pardon for the disobedience of the Brothers. But the Archbishop turned his back, and without a word left the room in which de la Salle had sought him. In the end, a priest of St. Sulpice, the Abbé Madot, intermediated. The Brothers agreed to wait on M. Pirot, apologise for their conduct, and nominally accept the new Superior ;

but on condition that, after being formally installed, M. Bricot should make no attempt to exercise any practical authority. As a matter of fact, he only once subsequently appeared at the House; and soon afterwards the Archbishop gave him another employment. The victory remained practically with the Brothers; and de la Salle continued the real Superior.

CHAPTER III.

*Removals and Persecutions.**

IN August, 1703, the Community moved to the Rue de Charonne from the house at Vaugirard. The new House had schools established in connection with it, as had been the case in St. Sulpice, and a Sunday School was opened.

Then followed fresh attacks on the part of outside writing-masters. In February, 1704, the lieutenant of police sent to seize all the writing materials in the Brothers' schools, and cited the Community before his tribunal. For non-compliance with this order de la Salle was fined and mulcted in costs, besides being forbidden to allow the Brothers to receive any but the poorest children, or to give these any education "above their condition." At the same time the Precentor ordered him to close his schools. Lawsuit followed lawsuit, and the Community was condemned without appeal. The House and schools, even the Sunday

* This Chapter and the Chapter which follows it are closely based on the record made by M. Ravelet in the large *Life of Blessed J. B. de la Salle*.

School, in the Rue de Charonne were closed, and all the effects seized. The Founder at first took refuge, with his novices, in the parish of St. Roch, but after a few months removed to Rouen. In February, 1706, the Parliament of Paris issued a decree forbidding him, or any of his Brothers, to keep a single Primary School in Paris or its suburbs without the formal permission of the Precentor.

M. de la Salle, although suffering from a tumour on the knee, returned to Paris, to bear the brunt of this new misfortune. The Brothers' schools being closed, the parish priest of St. Sulpice tried to save those under his control by seeking other masters, and, on failing in the quest, implored the Brothers to return. The Founder did not refuse, and early in October ten Brothers were appointed teachers on the condition that they should receive no pupils without a ticket of admission from the parish authorities. The irate outside schoolmasters having no excuse for further interference, the Brothers once more resumed their labours in peace.

In spite of these difficulties in Paris, de la Salle's work was rapidly spreading all over France. In 1699 he founded the school at Chartres, at the invitation of the Bishop, Mon-

signor Godet des Marais, who had been with him at St. Sulpice. There were already mistresses for the girls' schools, and the clergy of Chartres, being anxious to obtain similar advantages for the boys, sent the following petition to the Bishop :

“After having several times conferred together [said the parish priests], we are agreed that one of the chief causes of the indocility, the immodesty, the ignorance, and visible immorality of the children of the town is that of there being no free schools for the poor ; or else because the masters and mistresses who have hitherto taught the poor, almost without any leave or knowledge of superiors, only doing it as a means of gaining their bread, have not acquitted themselves as they should for the advantage of the children, either from incapacity or from want of zeal and application ; that it becomes needful now to take serious steps to remedy this great evil, so that there may be in the city some few schoolmasters and mistresses—under your gracious orders—of whose capacity, piety, and zeal there can be no doubt, and to whom we may entrust the care of youth ; and, above all, that there may be some few schools for the children of the poor, who, for want of being able to pay masters—being neither taught nor kept at school, but wandering about and idling—become easily corrupted, and grow incorrigible. With this idea, and having heard that there is in Paris a priest of great piety, who educates and trains for this office young men who have all the qualities necessary for



filling it worthily, and that he gives them wherever they are asked for, provided their maintenance be secured, for which a very modest sum is sufficient, we felt it an obligation to have recourse to your Lordship, to entreat you to use your influence, and even your alms, in order to procure for this town so powerful a help for the reformation of the ills of the people."

De la Salle provided the Brothers, and the Bishop undertook to bear all the expenses. For the Bishop was much attached to the saintly man, and whenever de la Salle was in Chartres pressed him to dine at his table, an invitation persistently declined. M. Ravelet tells us :

"One day, determined to overcome him, the Bishop had the doors of the palace locked, and so kept him a prisoner. The holy man, finding he could not get out, submitted with a good grace, and went in to the table. Amongst the guests were M. d'Aubigné, Vicar-General, afterwards Bishop of Noyon, and, finally, Archbishop of Rouen. After dinner the Bishop and his Vicar attacked Blessed de la Salle about the severity of his Rule and the extreme poverty of his clothes. They criticised his thick shoes, his broad hat, and his patched cloak. He defended himself with his wonted simplicity, and gave the reasons which had led him to frame the Rule as it stood. The shabbiness of his clothes was such, however, that the Bishop made him a present of a cloak; and, to leave him no pretext for not accepting it, he had it made of the

coarsest and commonest stuff. M. de la Salle took the gift humbly as an alms, and wore it ; but not long after, as he was coming home one winter's night, he was accosted by robbers who took a fancy to the cloak, and to them he ceded it."

Still, even at Chartres there were difficulties in the way of carrying out the regulations. The Bishop himself did not at all approve of teaching the children to read French before Latin ; but the Founder held firmly to his opinion, and at last Monsignor des Marais yielded to his arguments.

In the same year the schools at Calais were opened, and the Institute took root in Languedoc and Provence. In 1702 de la Salle's most ardent desire was gratified by the opening of a school in Rome, which was approved by letters-patent in 1706 ; while in 1705 the first school was opened at Rouen in connection with an ancient charity called "The Office of the Poor," and, following on this, the Novitiate was moved from Paris to St. Yon in Rouen. The Dijon schools were founded in the same year.

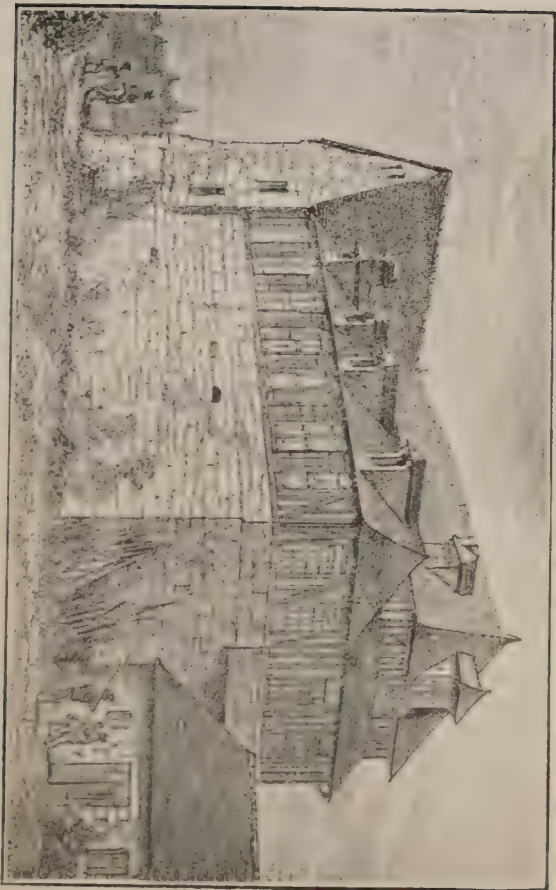
All these successes were, however, accompanied by so many trials and persecutions, that de la Salle resolved to retire from the active government of the Institute. After establishing a

Novice House at Marseilles, he proceeded to Grenoble. There, says his biographer :

“ He took his place humbly in the school, going assiduously to his class like the lowliest of the Brothers, teaching the alphabet to the tiny children, reading and writing to the older ones, and the rudiments of Christian doctrine to all. Nothing could tire out his patience ; his gentleness overcame the most unmanageable tempers, and his perseverance forced the dullest to take in his lessons. He was, in fact, what he wanted his disciples to be, and he presented to them the most perfect model of the master of a Christian school. He would not be dispensed from any of his duties. Every morning he conducted the children, walking two and two, to church, and installed them in their places ; then he went up to the altar, and celebrated Mass with such piety and recollection that he came to be known in the town as ‘the holy priest.’ ”

In addition to these duties he devoted himself to revising his writings, a task he had but just completed when he was taken seriously ill. As soon as he was better, news reached him which determined his return to Paris. It appeared that his opponents in the capital had determined to take advantage of his absence by introducing modifications into the Rule. They tried to persuade the Brothers that the government of the Community was too heavy a burthen for

HIS SCHOOL AT ROUTE.



one person, and that the whole organisation should be altered. Now the Founder had made the following one of the fundamental rules of government :

“His idea was that all the Brothers who were sent to teach in schools throughout France, and even all over the Christian world, were to form one family, who should have but one father, the Superior ; one paternal home, the Novitiate ; one law, the Rule. All the Brothers, being called to the same functions, were to be trained by the same method ; they were to receive the same teaching, practise the same virtues, imbibe the same spirit, and reproduce, as far as possible, the same type, which was that of the Founder. In order to realise this unity, they were not only to spend at least one year in the Novitiate, and be then, as it were, cast in the mould of the Institute, but to return from time to time and go back into this mould, so that the lines which had been rubbed off by contact with the world might be renewed, and resume their primitive fidelity. Thus the direction, begun during the first year’s training, was continued through life. The Brothers wrote once a month to the Superior-General ; he answered them, and by this means, as well as through the visitors, and his own visitations, he remained in contact with them, and was able to follow all the changes in their soul, to encourage and direct their progress, to prevent or arrest abuses. But for this he was armed with a supreme authority. Every Brother who strayed from the Rule could be

called back to the Mother-house, or sent elsewhere. Every budding evil could consequently be nipped the moment it was perceived. This constitution was simple, wise, and strong. The best proof of its excellence is its duration. It has lasted for two centuries, with merely a few changes, which are in reality developments rather than changes; and everywhere the results have been admirable."

As a substitute for this the following regulation was now proposed :

"The Brothers in the various towns should have for Superior a priest foreign to their Institute. Each house should be independent, and the Brothers should each be stationary, without being able to be moved. To repair the losses made by death among them, two or three novices should be trained as they were wanted. The central Novitiate should be suppressed. The Paris Brothers should form a distinct society, under the authority of an ecclesiastical Superior chosen outside the Society."

To which proposal de la Salle's friends opposed this judgment of the Abbot of La Trappe, given when he had been asked as to alteration in the Rule of Father Barré's foundation :

"I am of opinion that, regarding those works that are of God, we cannot do better than follow the intentions of the founders. It is they who have received the spirit and the mission, and we must believe that it is by their ministry that God means to declare His will.

So long as the first rules were observed, things prospered and received a particular blessing. God protected the works, He supported them, He increased them. But experience has taught us that, as soon as they abandoned the views of the founders, and adopted other maxims, and struck out roads which had been unknown to these saintly men, the holiest establishments degenerated and fell away. Human wisdom did but spoil what had been done and what was only to subsist by Divine Providence."

Brother Bartholomew, who had been left in charge in Paris did not approve any innovations, and even the Archbishop of Paris refused to permit them. It was quite manifest, however, that M. de la Salle's return to Paris was of urgent necessity. Finding persuasion useless, the Brothers of Paris, Versailles, and St. Denis hit upon the expedient of commanding his return, and for this purpose wrote to him as follows :

" Our dear Father, we, the principal Brothers of the Christian Schools, having at heart the glory of God, the good of the Church and of our Institute, consider that it is of the utmost importance that you should resume the care and general guidance of the holy work of God, which is also your work, since it has pleased God to make use of you to establish it and manage it so long. Everyone is convinced that God has given you the grace and the ability necessary for governing the new Insti-

tute which is so useful to the Church ; and it is only justice that we should testify that you have always governed it with great success and edification. This is why we humbly pray you, and further command you, in the name and on behalf of the Community to which you promised obedience, immediately to resume the general government of our Society. We remain, with profound respect, our dear Father, your very humble and very obedient servants. In Faith of which we sign. Given at Paris, April 1st, 1714."

M. de la Salle left Grenoble for Paris in August, 1714. Meanwhile M. de la Chétardie had died, and his successor was entirely friendly to the Brothers. Although M. de la Chétardie had not understood the scope of de la Salle's work, he was a most worthy priest, as his last will testifies, where he says :

" I commend myself to the prayers of the holy clergy and the men and women of the parish, beseeching them to remember me before the Lord, and to forgive me if in any way I have offended in my duty to them. I declare that I have no gold or silver of my own. Whatever may be found in my house is a deposit confided to me, which must be given to the charitable Confraternities. As to my furniture, it is of very little value. Such are my last wishes in leaving this world ; and I leave all without regret, except the Church of Jesus Christ, founded on the merits and mercies of God. I am going away, but I shall return ; I am going

to sleep, but I shall awake ; I am dying, but I shall rise again : I bear with me this sweet hope, and go down into the grave awaiting the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen."

In 1715, finding the means of living too expensive in Paris, Blessed de la Salle again reinstated the Novitate at St. Yon, where he was visited by M. Gense the founder of the Calais schools, to whom he related the history of his struggles, concluding with these words :

"For my part, I own to you that if God had shown me the labours and crosses that were to accompany any good I was to do in founding the Institute, my courage would have failed ; and, far from undertaking it, I should not have dared to put my hand to the work. A prey to opposition, I have been persecuted even by Prelates—by those from whom I had most right to expect help. My own children, those whom I begot in Jesus Christ, and cherished with the utmost tenderness, whom I trained with the greatest care, and to whom I looked for great services, rose up against me, and added to external trials those interior ones which are so much more acute. In a word, if God had not held out His hand, and visibly sustained the edifice, it would long ago have been buried under its own ruins. The magistrates joined with our enemies, and lent them the weight of their authority to overthrow us. As our office offends the schoolmasters, we have in every one of these a declared and

inveterate enemy, and all in a body they have often armed the powers of the world to destroy us. Yet, notwithstanding all, the edifice is standing, although it so often trembled on the brink of ruin. This is what leads me to hope that it will endure, and will render to the Church the services she has a right to expect from it."

On his return to Rouen from a visitation of the Houses in 1716, M. de la Salle decided on his final resignation, and on taking measures for the election of a new Superior-General, so as to avoid all confusion at his death. After much opposition, Brother Bartholomew made arrangements for a General Assembly of the Directors of the Institute, for which the Founder laid down the following rules :

"Purify your intentions and desires if you want to be the organs of the Holy Ghost in naming him who is destined to govern you. Set aside all human considerations, do not listen to the voice of Nature, reject false lights and the prejudices of the human spirit. Act without any interested feeling, without sympathy or antipathy, without passion or inclination, without natural attraction or repulsion. Keep your hearts in a state of complete indifference, and incline them only towards him who will be set before you by the majority of votes. As it is not you who are to elect, but God in you and by you, lift up your hearts to Him, and weary not in addressing to Him that prayer of the Apostles : "Show us him whom Thou hast

chosen." If you wish to know that chosen one, give your vote to whomsoever your conscience names, to him who is pointed out by merit, to him who at the hour of your death you would wish to have chosen, to him who is best fitted to govern the Institute, who most possesses its spirit, who is best capable of maintaining order, of keeping alive fervour, and sanctifying you all. Name him who is known to you as the most enlightened, the wisest, the most virtuous, the firmest. Give your vote to him who possesses the seven qualities that are so necessary for governing the family of God—prudence, gentleness, vigilance, firmness, piety, zeal, and charity; to him who presents in the highest degree that rare combination of virtues—zeal with prudence, light with charity, firmness with gentleness, kindness with strictness; to him who is gentle without softness, vigilant without over-anxiety, firm without inflexibility, zealous without bitterness, good without weakness, prudent without cunning. Give your vote to him who is the holiest, or wishes to become so, who is worthy of being your model in all things; to him who will be the humblest in the first place, who will have the heart of a father towards you, who makes his authority lovable. Look neither to talents nor to birth in making this choice, nor to age nor length of years in the Institute, nor to face, nor to figure. Look not at the man, but see God in him. You will choose him whom God Himself has chosen if you seek a man according to His heart, and not according to your own; a man of grace in whom grace acts, and not a man according to your taste and natural inclination."

After a deliberation lasting two days, Brother Bartholomew was elected on May 18th, 1717, having for his two assistants the Directors of the Houses at Paris and Rheims.

CHAPTER IV.

Faithful unto Death.

As soon as de la Salle was free from the cares of government, he not only refused to give any orders, but he would not take even the least liberty without asking permission. In the refectory he insisted on having the last place after the serving Brothers. At recreation he remained with the youngest, and the only privileges he retained were those of saying Mass, confessing the Brothers and novices, and directing their consciences.

One of his former opponents, M. Rogier, had, by way of reparation, left him a considerable sum in his will, and he was obliged to go to Paris for the necessary formalities. He reached that city on October 4th, 1717. He refused to stay at the Brothers' house, shunning the honours that would be paid him there, and begged for hospitality at the Seminary of St. Nicholas-de-Chardonnet, where he hoped to be quiet and unknown, and where he edified all the inmates. His biographer says :

“Despite his age, he rose at the same hour as the others, and he was always the first at the exercises, at the morning meditation, at the spiritual conferences, and at Divine Office. In spite of his infirmities, he would not be dispensed from a single point of the Rule, and denied himself everything that approached an alleviation. During this winter that he passed in Paris, he never had a fire in his room. Instead of warming himself at recreation with the others, he used to walk in the garden with some young seminarians whom he was trying to influence with the love of God and detachment from this world. In all things he was poor and humble. His clothes were of the coarsest serge. In conversation he never spoke of himself or of what he had done. He deferred meekly to others, and was always ready to yield to their opinion, seeming to forget all that he had been, and all that he had done. He looked upon himself truly as the lowest in the house.”

He found it hard to leave this quiet retreat. The Brothers at St. Yon were impatient for his return, but he lingered on at St. Nicholas. He wrote thence to Brother Bartholomew :

“I am a good-for-nothing, and the Institute ought to look upon it as a special mercy of Divine Providence to be rid of me. I want to be led, not to lead. It is time I should look after my own sanctification ; I have been looking after other people’s long enough ; since God has given me such a good opportunity, I must profit by it, and, if I were to let it escape, I should have to regret it for the rest of my life ;

I have been commanding long enough. The day has come for me to obey; and I ought to try and teach you all, by my example, to prefer the state of dependence to that of authority. All things considered, I have a mind to end my days where I am."

Brother Bartholomew at last came to fetch him, and he re-entered St. Yon in 1718. Here he set to work to put everything in order, preparing for his approaching death. He formed the novices, taught the young boarders, and worked at some books for the Brothers, amongst them *A Method of Mental Prayer*.

Yet one more trial awaited him. The Bishop of Boulogne, who in 1716 had been his friend and full of sympathy, was an ardent Jansenist, defending Quesnel's book and appealing against the Bull *Unigenitus*. Part of his clergy had gone over with him, and they hoped to induce the Brothers to join them. In order to influence them, they said that M. de la Salle himself inclined to the new doctrines, and that he also had appealed against the Bull *Unigenitus*. Upon this the Brothers wrote to him, when he answered :

"I don't think I gave the Dean reason to say I was of the number of those who were appealing, my dear Brother. I never dreamed of appealing, any more than of embracing the

new doctrine of the appellants to the future Council. I have too much respect for our Holy Father the Pope, and too much submission for the decision of the Holy See, not to acquiesce."

During the Lent of 1719, he was afflicted with asthma, and tormented with rheumatism caught by sleeping on damp bedding in his exposed cell at the little house of Vaugirard. Yet he refused to moderate his austerities. He insisted on observing the Lent strictly, saying: "The victim is going to be immolated, we must work at its purification." At length, his asthma increasing, his confessor forbade him to abstain. Soon after, a door fell on his head, and, perhaps mercifully, hastened his end. But, though the doctor warned him that his illness was mortal, he rose from bed to attend all the exercises, until he was no longer able to move. When, however, the Feast drew near of his beloved St. Joseph, under whose protection he had placed the Institute, his strength rallied; so that he was able to fulfil his cherished wish of saying Mass in the midst of his Brothers. He spent the day amongst them, giving them advice. But the result of the exertion was that he became worse, and the Curé of St. Sever warned him that he was about to appear before his God. "I know it,"

replied de la Salle ; “and I am quite resigned to His orders. My fate is in His hands. May His will be done ! ”

On Wednesday in Holy Week he received Viaticum. His surplice and stole were put on him, he was raised out of bed, and seated in a chair. There he sat waiting until he heard the sound of the bell. Then he fell on his knees, and received Holy Communion with an extraordinary devotion. Next day Extreme Unction was administered.

From that time until Good Friday evening he lay in bed, with gradually sinking strength, but entirely conscious ; advising his disciples, and even strangers who came to him. On Good Friday evening he was for a time unconscious, and they began the Prayers for the Dying. Then for a few moments he came to himself ; but, as he was advising the Brethren against intercourse with worldly persons, if they would preserve their vocations, he entered on his agony.

Throughout Holy Thursday night he may be said to have been associated with the Passion of his Master ; till, towards two in the morning, he regained consciousness, and began to recite the prayer—*Maria, Mater gratiæ*. The Brother Superior asked him if he accepted all his

sufferings with joy. "Yes," were the last words of de la Salle, "I adore in all things the designs of God concerning me." For an hour longer he lay with placid face, though agonised body. Then, at four o'clock, he joined his hands, and, with uplifted eyes, rose in his bed, and died.

His remains were laid to rest in the Chapel of St. Suzanne in the Church of St. Sever, being borne to the grave by six Brothers followed by an immense multitude of mourners. On his tomb is engraved the following inscription :

"Here awaits the Resurrection Venerable Jean Baptiste de la Salle of Rheims, Priest, Doctor in Theology, Canon of the Metropolitan Church of Rheims, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. He died on Good Friday, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, on April 7, 1719, in the House of the Brothers of St. Yon in this parish. May God grant him rest !"

M. Ravelet says of de la Salle's personal appearance and character :

"Blessed de la Salle was rather above the middle height, and well proportioned. His constitution, delicate in childhood, had grown strong from exercise and work, until mortification and excessive fatigue weakened his health. His forehead was broad, his nose straight, his eyes large and of a blueish grey, his skin was tanned by exposure and travelling, his hair, which curled and had been chestnut in his youth, was grey and white in his declining

years. His countenance bore the stamp of great sweetness and dignity. His air was modest and serene, his manners were simple and gracious. An atmosphere of holiness breathed from his whole person. We are here but reproducing the incomparable portrait of his body traced by his first historian. Let us now reproduce that of his soul, drawn by the same master-hand. 'Nobody,' says Canon Blain, 'had more the air of a Saint. Grace enthroned, as it were, on his countenance, seemed to show forth to men what he was before God, and depict there the beauties of his soul. You were drawn towards God in looking at him. Everything in him breathed the perfume of the virtues of humility, modesty, sweetness, charity, tranquillity, equability of mind, mortification, and deep piety. Always the same under all circumstances of sorrow and trouble, and amid so many painful and vexatious events, he was like unto a man whose heart, fixed on Heaven, takes no interest in what is passing here below; he strove to regulate all his thoughts and desires according to God's glory and solely with a view to the Divine will.

“ ‘His life was the Gospel put into practice. To do penance, to deny oneself, to mortify and crucify the flesh, to pray, to converse with God, to appear amongst men only to labour for their salvation or to receive their contempt, to devote oneself wholly to the poorest and the most abandoned, to suffer everything, to give way to everyone, never to complain, never to feel offended, always to see oneself in the wrong, to bless God, to take His will in all things for the

rule of our own will, to love our friends in Him, and our enemies for Him, to see and desire only God in all things, to be interested only in His glory, to forget all else, to have no aversion from anything but the world, to hate nothing but sin, to fear nothing save to displease the Sovereign Majesty, to desire only to imitate Jesus Christ, to be attracted only by the Cross, and to love God alone—this is the epitome of the Gospel and of Blessed de la Salle's life. What examples of self-forgetfulness, of severity for the body, of contempt for the world, of thirst for justice, of purity of heart, of a holy passion for humiliation and suffering, of detachment from all earthly things, of union with God and sacrifice of self, does not the history of this saintly priest offer to us! What graces are hidden in his interior life, and what merits accumulated in that life crucified by suffering, will be manifested on that day when the secrets of hearts shall be revealed. The servant of God was as a man dead to all things, a man in whom nature no longer dared to show itself, nor put forward the least claim; a man whose life was wholly supernatural, celestial, divine; who thought, spoke, and acted as if he had been of a higher nature; a man to whom virtue had become his natural element, whose life was God, whose soul and centre were Jesus Christ. In prayer he looked like an angel; at the altar like a seraph; in his conduct he was truly an Apostolic man; in tribulation he was another Job; in poverty a Tobias; in abandonment to Providence a Francis of Assisi; in the rigours of penance a second Abbé de Rancé; in the practice of obedience a new Dositheus; in the



ON HIS DEATH BED.

exercise of every virtue a perfect disciple of Jesus Christ. Such was Venerable de la Salle; such is his true portrait.'"

Until 1734 the body remained in its first resting-place, when it was exhumed and placed in the church the Brothers had built at their house at St. Yon. In 1793 a revolutionary mob broke open the tomb, but left the remains almost intact. They were again exhumed when the Cause of Canonisation was begun, and in 1881, they were removed to the chapel of the Brothers' Boarding School at Rouen. Here they remained till 1906, when, on account of the closing of the Brothers' Schools in France they were removed to the chapel of the new Mother-House of the Institute at Lembecq-lez-Hal in Belgium.



CHAPTER V.

The Successors of de la Salle.

IN the century and a half following the death of its Founder, the Institute had nine Superiors. During the administration of the first, it was sustained; during the administration of the second, it was extended over France, and recognised by the State and the Papacy; during the administration of the third, it was continued; during that of the fourth, its educational scope was enlarged, its administrative system improved; during that of the fifth, it was cut down; under the provisional rule of a Vicar-General it revived; during the administration of the sixth Superior, it fought the Government and triumphed, it was centralised at Paris; during the administration of the seventh, it developed quietly; during that of the eighth, it again widened its educational scope; during that of the ninth, it once more withstood the Government, spread over Europe, into Asia, Africa, and the New World, weathered the Paris Commune of 1870, and was transmitted

in flourishing condition to our own day. In the source of this period it originated the principle of the Boarding School, the Commercial and Technical School, the Free Library, and the Night School. Such is the skeleton of the Brothers' history in modern times.

On Brother Bartholomew, who had been appointed Superior during the Founder's life, fell the sole responsibility of the Institute after his death. He seems to have been a kindly, gentle man, with no very conspicuous administrative qualities ; under whom the Institute remained stationary. His chief title to remembrance is that he guarded it against Jansenism ; and his death, after a rule of only fourteen months, transferred the Superiorship to Brother Timothy. The new Superior proved a very able administrator. His first achievement was to obtain from Louis XV the official recognition of the Congregation ; and this was followed by recognition from the Holy See. The Bull of January 26th, 1725, included the Institute among the Religious Congregations, and approved its Rule. After these recognitions the Institute extended its network all over France. Between 1728 and 1751 no fewer than seventy-two fresh foundations were made in various parts of the kingdom.

Brother Claude, the next Superior, had an uneventful rule of sixteen years ; and his successor, Brother Florence, distinguished himself principally by removing the Institute to Paris, and dividing it into three Provinces. When, in 1777, he was followed by Brother Agathon, that Revolution was approaching amidst which the whole eighteenth century social fabric, rotten structure that it was, may be said to have crashed into flames. With the old order which then yielded place to a new, the Brothers of the Christian Schools neither disappeared nor changed ; and the better to appreciate this continuity, let us note what they had accomplished when the age was nearing its impenitent end.

To the Primary Schools, for which the Institute was founded, had been added Boarding Schools. To the Boarding School, indeed, the Brothers gave a larger and more intelligent form. They had simply invented Technical Education. At Bordeaux, for instance, in 1744, they had opened a Commercial School for teaching everything connected with trade. At Vannes the Brothers taught mathematics and hydrography, trained sailors in navigation, and gave special instruction to pilots. At Cahors they professed architecture ; at Castres they taught practical geometry, surveying, and double-entry

book-keeping ; at Cherbourg horticulture and gardening. In Paris they opened a drawing class for children destined to professions requiring skill in design. All this in an age when classical study was as tyrannically enforced as it is now in danger of being neglected ! They published school books of a practical and unpedantic kind : indeed, at Montauban they established a Free Circulating Library of school books—the first assertion of that principle which has developed into the Free Library movement of our own day.

As regards their methods : they insisted on the importance of combining with mere instruction technical training, observed the rule of moderate work and avoidance of over-study, and relied for the preservation of discipline as much as possible upon persuasion and kindness. De la Salle himself had wished to minimise the use of the rod and the ferule ; his successors had carefully restricted and regulated it ; finally, in 1777, corporal punishment was abolished in the Christian Schools. We in England have not quite managed that yet. But think of it then, in a century when flogging was almost a branch of polite learning, when Sir Roger spoke with bated breath of the great man who had flogged his grandfather, and the Bully Bowyer

was always superstitiously revered by the "inspired charity-boy" whom he had so often thrashed !

The Christian Schools instituted also public examinations before the distribution of prizes. At these examinations, which began in the first year of Brother Florence's superiorship, the children were questioned by priests in religious knowledge and by laymen on secular subjects. Here we see anticipated the modern system of lay and ecclesiastical inspection, and the effect is described as excellent. To finish this review of the Institute on the eve of the Revolution : in 1778 it numbered 760 masters, under whom were 114 Houses, 420 classes, and 31,000 children. Brother Agathon, the new Superior, was obliged to double his Assistants to four ; and added to the scholasticate at Rouen three others.

The Revolution began. The mob rushed to the Bastille, and made history ; the Minister rushed to the King, and made a phrase. The King : " But—but this is a revolt !" The Minister : " Sire, it is a revolution !" Let us be candid ; we English might, perhaps, have made the history, we could hardly have made the phrase. George III under such circumstances would probably have said : " Eh, what ?

What? What?" The Minister have replied: "Deuced awkward business, Sir!" and there an end. But across the Channel actors in great historical events always say the dramatically right thing at the dramatically right moment, even if someone has to invent it for them afterwards! In that *Théâtre Français* all the men and women are indeed players: they play to a circle of nations, and make their points with a neatness that never fails.

So the revolt which was more than a revolt began; and what should the Brothers of the Christian Schools need to fear from it? What needed the Free Educators of the People to fear from the champions of Freedom and the People? The precursors of the Revolution had shown the Institute why it had to fear. Voltaire, the grinning gargoyle of the Revolutionary edifice—Voltaire, the Apostle of Equality and Fraternity who said of the people, "They are like oxen, they only need a spur, a yoke, and some hay"—Voltaire and his disciples had aroused public prejudice against popular education. La Chalotais, *procureur général* to the Parliament of Rennes, friend of D'Alembert, and author of the notorious *Compte rendu des constitutions des Jésuites*—La Chalotais distinguished the Institute by his enmity. "Men," said he, "who

are only intended to handle the plane and the file ought not to be taught to read and write. The Brothers; by giving them education, are ruining everything." De Langourla, another *doctrinaire* at Rennes, had exclaimed: "We must, as I said to the King, hunt out those *Ignorantins*, those Brothers with the long sleeves, that Jesus rebukes in the person of the Pharisees; for the rascals teach people to handle the pen, which is such a dangerous weapon in certain hands." And on similar grounds had a magistrate of Arles opposed their foundation there. "If once the Brothers begin to teach reading and writing gratuitously, all the inhabitants will send their children to them; and these children, instead of being accustomed to hard work from their tender years, will grow up unfit for it." Such were the arguments of the preachers of "equality," when the educators happened to be Christian Religious.

Yet the Revolution, when it broke out, did not at once proceed to attack the Christian Schools. The new authorities lacked secular schoolmasters, and accordingly houses charged with public education were at first exempted from the decrees against the Religious Orders. But in March, 1791, professors engaged in public educational functions were required to

take the Civil Oath ; which, of course, the Brothers were bound in conscience to reject. At Rennes they were consequently thrown into prison ; while in many places the mob rose against them, and the schools were taken from them. At other places the popular feeling protected them. “ Without the Brothers,” asked the Municipality of Chartres, “ what will become of the children of the poor ? Who will teach them ? ” They pleaded that they were not public functionaries ; but in August, 1792, a decree of the National Assembly decided their fate.

On the ground that “ a really free State cannot suffer in its midst any corporation, even that which, devoted to public instruction, has deserved well of the nation,” the Brothers of the Christian Schools were formally suppressed. Their schools were broken into, the Brothers turned adrift, their books torn to shreds, alphabets destroyed, the children let loose, the lights put out : and with this putting out of lights, physical and figurative, was the era of enlightenment and knowledge inaugurated. The Congregation ceased to exist. The Brothers dispersed, and engaged in secular callings, mostly as public or private tutors. Brother Agathon, the Superior, under a secular disguise, gained his scanty living in Paris as a teacher of

mathematics. Not for nothing had one of their enemies called them "these amphibious ecclesiastics!" Some of them were imprisoned, some transported, some killed. The best commentary on it all is the speech of Brother Martien at Rennes before the judges who condemned him to death: "I direct a free school. If your protestations of love for the People are sincere, if your principles of fraternity are not a vain and hypocritical formula, my functions justify me; and, far from being imputed to me as a crime, they give me a sacred claim on your gratitude."

The Reign of Terror passed, and individual Brothers, without resuming the habit of the Institute, began again to open schools here and there. In some places "these amphibious ecclesiastics" even paved the way for the return of the priests, by gathering together the people and reading religious services. In 1793 Pope Pius VI gave them a rallying-point by naming as their acting head, with the title of Vicar-General, Brother Frumence, the Superior of the house in Rome. Under this title Brother Frumence governed the Institute till the end of his days; for Brother Agathon, who had retired to Tours, died of his hardships in 1797.

Gradually the Brothers reconstituted their

Communities at Lyons, Rheims, Laon, and Paris ; and in 1803, through the intervention of Cardinal Fesch, Portalis reported in their favour to the First Consul. The result was a Consular Decree by which Napoleon formally re-established the Institute, and authorised it to fix its head-quarters at Lyons. Cardinal Fesch recalled to its ranks by letter the Religious who had been scattered to various quarters by the Revolution ; and in 1808 the seal was set on the marvellous resurrection of the Congregation by its inclusion in Napoleon's newly-formed Imperial University. This body was created to control Public Education throughout the Empire, and endured after the Restoration. It was a most Providential circumstance, in more than one way, that the Institute should have been admitted to the University ; since, in all likelihood, without the protection the Brothers were thus enabled to obtain, they would have been included in the conscriptions which drained France during the last agonies of the Empire. Another happy circumstance for the Brothers was the friendship of Abbé Émery, whose unselfish character won the favour and recognition of Napoleon. Any man for whom either Napoleon or Byron had no sneer must assuredly have possessed unusual attributes. The last

anomaly remaining from the Revolution days came to an end in 1810, when Brother Frumence died, and was succeeded by a regularly constituted Superior in the person of Brother Gerbaud.

Brother Gerbaud's reign, which extended through the greater part of the Restoration, was marked by the transference of the centre of the Institute to Paris ; by a successful conflict against the attempt to subject it to the conscription ; and, still more, by an arduous struggle against the Mutual, or Lancastrian, system of teaching. That this system should ever have obtained Government patronage is an astonishing example of human proneness to educational "fads." It consisted in making the adult teacher a mere kind of head-master, with a general supervision ; while the active teaching was given by the more advanced among the children themselves. It was, in fact, an extension of the monitorial system from the realm of discipline to that of instruction. Its grain of truth is obvious. As a matter of fact, the cleverer boy can often explain to the duller boy what the latter has failed to understand from the Master. So far as such assistance can be useful, it is informally sought in every school, and rendered with more or less good

nature and grumbling. But to make it a system, is to expect from the juvenile teacher a sustained patience, tact, and self-control such as few boys possess ; while the element of authority must evidently be lacking in such instruction. Yet this system was actually taken up by the Government, pushed by the Minister, sanctioned by the King, and pressed on the Brothers until their resistance involved them in a veritable official persecution. Several of the Christian Schools were closed before the Minister at length gave way, and agreed to an arrangement sanctioned by the King.

During the generalship of the next Superior, Brother William of Jesus, the struggle with the Mutual Schools was continued. But the leading events of his brief rule of eight years were the renewal of those Boarding Schools for professional and commercial studies which had existed before the Revolution, and the creation at Rouen of a Normal School, in which the Brothers undertook to train secular masters. This innovation was afterwards imitated by the Government.

Brother Anaclet, who succeeded Brother William of Jesus in 1830, governed for just the same period of years ; but his Generalship, though short, was fruitful. He had the good fortune to

be contemporaneous with the Minister Guizot ; and that votary of Education admired him so much that only the humility of the Superior prevented Guizot from investing him with the cross of the Legion of Honour. Within a year after Brother Anaclet's accession, a decree compelled the Brothers to pass the examinations required from secular teachers before they could obtain their diplomas. This, which the historian of the Congregation resents, perhaps naturally, as the loss of a privilege, seems to me in reality a gain. It fittingly, I think, inaugurated a period during which they were to fight beside, rather than against, the secular teachers.

The law of 1833, by which Guizot dealt with the entire system of Elementary Education, tended to promote the same result. It took up the idea of Normal schools for masters, which had been introduced by the Brothers under the previous Superior. In consequence, Brother Anaclet called a General Chapter, revised the school-books of the Congregation, and introduced further improvements which might help the Institute to hold its place against its secular rivals. Nor was the Normal school the only idea which they had the honour of furnishing to the Government. During this Generalship the Brothers originated those Night-schools for

Adults, which have since secured general and successful adoption. M. Guizot at once discerned the importance of the act, furnished the Brothers with State aid to extend its scope, and encouraged others to follow their example.

Brother Philip, who succeeded Brother Anacleto in 1838, governed for the period, unexampled since de la Salle himself, of thirty-six years. His biographers, indeed, call him "a second de la Salle," and his Generalship, which lasted till after the Commune, takes us into modern times and the thick of the Educational struggle. He multiplied exceedingly the Boarding Schools of the Congregation, and kept its educational methods abreast of the new requirements and developments of the day. Indeed, I err in saying "its educational methods"; I should rather say their expansion and application. For nothing has been more noteworthy about the methods so sagaciously elaborated by de la Salle than their flexibility; they adjust themselves and differentiate themselves in response to every change of conditions, with the vital plasticity of protoplasm. Brother Philip had to encounter, and successfully encountered, a partial attempt to subject his Brothers to the conscription; he had also to encounter an attack on de la Salle's principle that the Brothers

should take no fees for the education they imparted. To this last attack he was compelled, by the arbitrary closing of several of the Christian Schools, to yield temporarily and under protest. The Brothers continued to refuse all fees for themselves ; but the Municipalities were suffered to impose what fees they thought requisite on the children's parents, and these fees the Brothers handed over to the Municipal authorities.

Brother Philip's most striking achievement, however, is the success with which he spread the Institute in foreign countries. Its present ubiquitous activity takes its real date from his Generalship. Indeed, a statesman said of him, "There is the making of a Minister in that man"; and so universally were his great administrative qualities recognised, that when the Educational Law of 1850 was in preparation he was called to serve on the extra-Parliamentary Commission charged with drawing up its plan. For a time also, during his rule, the Brothers worked with great success in the service of the prisons. This had been one of their Founder's ideas, and they achieved a marvellous reform in the jails entrusted to them. But the outbreak of revolutionary trouble in 1848 put an end to this, and the Brothers returned to

their more vital work of education. Their success during their period of employment in prison work is nevertheless not without its important bearing on the theory advocated by Victor Hugo, among others, so eloquently in the conclusion of *Claude Gueux*—that our prisons should be made moral *sanatoria* rather than mere places of penal suffering.

Towards the close of Brother Philip's government occurred the Franco-German War. Amidst the stress of that time the Brothers, in addition to their work of teaching, put themselves forward in numbers for Ambulance work, and Brother Philip offered all his Houses for the reception of the wounded. On the eve of the Battle of Champigny, perhaps the bloodiest of the battles before Paris during the siege, 150 of the Brothers were drawn up in line near the Champ de Mars, waiting to set off for the battlefield. In the conflict, when they arrived, they advanced so recklessly under fire, in their eagerness to succour the wounded, that General Ducrot ordered them to stand back. At Bourget, which De Neuville's picture has made memorable, one of their number, Brother Nethelme, fell mortally wounded. So great was their devotion at this battle that after it was over Dr. Ricord, one of the most conspicuous among

the Ambulance surgeons, meeting a Brother, enquired: "Brother, is one ever allowed to embrace you?" "There is nothing in the Rule against it," replied the Brother. "Then permit me to have the honour of embracing you. You are admirable, you and yours. Take this kiss from me to Brother Philip and all your Brothers, and tell them that we all thank you in our name and the name of France."

At the close of the war a public tribute was paid, or rather two public tributes were paid, to the heroism of the Brothers. The American city of Boston offered a prize "to the finest example of patriotism given during the war." The awarding of the prize was left with the French Academy, and that body decreed it to the Institute of de la Salle. Finally the Cross of the Legion of Honour was bestowed on Brother Philip. It was only the argument that the honour was in reality bestowed on his Congregation, not on himself, which overcame his modest reluctance to accept it, and as soon as the ceremony was over the Cross disappeared from his bosom, nor did any man ever know what became of it. After the siege came the Commune. The Brothers suffered like all the other Religious Orders at the hands of the insurgents, though they had not to consummate

their sufferings by martyrdom. Twenty-six of them were imprisoned with the hostages in Mazas, and only chance saved them from being massacred with the rest. The Assistant, Brother Calixtus, who remained in the Mother-house throughout the Commune, was at once arrested there by forty National Guards, but the indignation of the crowd and the sympathy of the Guards themselves resulted in his being set at liberty again.

It was fitting that after all these trials that the "Second de la Salle" should be consoled in his closing days by the glorification of his great model. In 1840 the Founder had been pronounced Venerable. On November 1st, 1873, it was solemnly decreed that "John Baptist de la Salle had practised the great Christian virtues in a heroic degree." To assist in this event Brother Philip was called to Rome, where he was received by Pius IX, and not long after his return he died. The chapel in which his body lay during the two days before its funeral was thronged by people anxious to pray beside it, and a vast crowd of all classes followed him to the grave.

The deceased Superior's successor, Brother Jean-Olympe, governed the Institute only for a year, and was followed by Brother Irlide. The

latter Superior continued successfully the multifarious works launched under Brother Philip ; founded Houses at Jerusalem, Jaffa, Caïffa, Trebizond, Erzeroum and Ramleh. Under his Generalship began the Government laicisation of the schools ; but wherever the Brothers have been turned out of one school they have opened others, supported by Catholic committees, and the tide of scholars has followed them.

In 1884 Brother Irlide died, and was succeeded by Brother Joseph, the best comment on whose work is the state of the Christian Schools to-day. One glory in particular was reserved for his Generalship : the Beatification of de la Salle, promulgated by Leo XIII in February, 1888. (*See the Postscript on page 83*).

CHAPTER VI.

From which the Reader may conclude many things.

FROM this unavoidably jejune sketch it is possible to form some idea of what these "amphibious ecclesiastics" are, and what their work has been. They are, as I said at starting, an Order of Schoolmasters. The Brother of the Christian Schools is a being whose one worldly duty is to educate. Everything which might distract him from that object is spared him. He is unmarried, that he may be without the distraction of wife and family and family anxieties ; he is not a cleric, that he may be without the obligation of Masses to say and Office to recite. He is part of an old scholastic army, which has its system, traditions and traditional experience in teaching, as an old established military force has in warfare. His health is considered, for he has his holiday every week and his six weeks' holiday every year. Lastly, when he is past teaching, there is the House recently erected at Fleury, on the heights of Meudon, where he can pass an

old age of honourably earned leisure amid verdure and flowers, within hearing of the happy voices of the children in the neighbouring Orphanage. It is by absolute concentration that one attains mastery in any art. What wonder, then, if the Brothers of the Christian Schools are Masters among Schoolmasters? What wonder if from their "forging-house of thought" have come most of the educational weapons which are now in every educator's hand?

The way in which they have spread is, therefore, no marvel. They are in Belgium, in Spain, in Italy, in Austria, in England, in Ireland, in the Levant, in Constantinople, in the Far East, in Egypt, in Tunis and Algeria, in Madagascar, in Canada, in the States, in South America, South Africa, Australia. The case of the United States is especially interesting, because it shows how these Brothers, though their Institute is of French origin, are capable of adapting themselves to the needs of an Anglo-Saxon race. In the district of New York, before the Nineteenth Century closed, they had thirty establishments, with 342 Brothers; in that of Baltimore twenty schools, with 160 Brothers; in Philadelphia seven establishments, with over fifty Brothers.

But let me draw special attention to the great

Protectory of New York, a superb example of these Technical Schools, which the Brothers had the glory of originating. It sprang into existence from the desire of Archbishop Hughes to prevent the proselytising of destitute Catholic children by Protestant societies. At a meeting called by him to discuss the proposed institution, Brother Patrick, the President of Manhattan College, offered to give Brothers for its management.

“ In God’s name, Gentlemen, let us begin the work ! ” at once cried the Archbishop ; and the Protectory was established. Two thousand children have a choice of twenty different trades, all of which are taught on the spot. Carpentering, tailoring, shoemaking, silk-weaving, bookbinding, printing, and electrotyping are some amongst the occupations to which they are trained. Each day is passed partly in the classroom and partly in the workshop. The quality of the results was made manifest at the Health Exhibition held in London in 1894 ; for the New York Protectory contributed largely among the Technical Schools of the Institute which sent specimens to the Exhibition. The *Times* declared that the Brothers “ have long ago solved the problem of Technical Education.” The triumph of the Institute was the

more marked, because its exhibits were placed side by side with the exhibits sent from the French Government Schools. Yet in spite of this, the *Athenæum* wrote : “ By the side of the collection framed under the direction of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts (of France) the Christian Brothers contribute a remarkable and valuable collection, and it is to be hoped that our School Boards and school managers will do their utmost to help their teachers to visit these most interesting and suggestive collections.”

Sir Joshua Fitch, one of Her Majesty's Senior Inspectors of Schools, said in a letter to the teachers of England : “ The most remarkable portion of this section is that shown by the Christian Brothers.” While the *Journal of Education* wrote : “ No schoolmaster who has his heart in his profession will let such an opportunity slip. . . . Before leaving this wonderful exhibit, we cannot help asking how these results have been produced. ‘ By faith,’ would be the answer of the Brethren, and this we agree is the only explanation possible. The Brothers, from their Founder downwards, have adopted their calling from pure love of the work. . . . Teaching with them is not a trade, but a profession, or rather a vocation.

And it follows that men who work in this spirit will invent, or adopt when invented, the right methods."

"It is easier than people suppose to soar above names and arrive at ideas. . . . It is better to do what little good can be done, rather than tolerate what is very bad. . . . The Catholics should produce their Cross to do good, not flourish it to create parties. The Catholics, unfortunately, have not the sense of association sufficiently developed for Christian works ; but they have it only too well developed for political purposes. They ought to form groups, to work up the Labour Question, infant education, the welfare of the working men."

These words of Leo XIII were spoken of French, rather than of English Catholics. In England, religious equality means religious equality. In France, religious equality means irreligious equality. That is a distinction ; it is also a difference. But I quote the Pope's words because, with this proviso, they are pertinent to all Catholics ; and so that they may preface the words of a great English Prelate. The first half of my citation is from Cardinal Manning's letter to the *XX^{me} Siècle*, the second from his letter to the Count de Mun.

“ We have been, up to now, hampered by an excessive individualism, and the Twentieth Century will show that mankind is greater and more noble than any individual thing. This doctrine, which has its foundation upon Nature’s law and Christianity, is taxed with being Socialistic by thoughtless and rash people, as well as by capitalists and the wealthy. But the future will see the light of reason shed upon the social state of the labouring world. We shall then ascertain what laws are fundamental in a Christian country. Politicians and political economists of the modern school have had their day. . . . The coming age will belong neither to the capitalists nor to the commercial classes, but to the People. If we can gain their confidence we can counsel them : if we show them a blind opposition they will have the power to destroy all that is good. But I hope much from the action of the Church all Governments are despoiling and rejecting. Her true home is with the People ; they will hear her voice.”

Free Education as a principle (apart from any perverted use which may be made of it by an individual faction) involves the whole change of attitude which the Cardinal proclaims. It is one among many signs of a common tendency. It involves the negation of Individualism. The hearts of men are softening to each other ; we

will no longer suffer unchecked the rehatched "dragons of the prime"; many minds, with many thoughts, many aims, are uniting with a common watchword against a common foe.

Are we not formed, as notes of music are,
For one another, though dissimilar?

We are raising from the dust a fallen standard of Christianity: not in phrase merely, but in practice; not by lips only, but by lives also, we are reaffirming the Brotherhood of Man. Rousseau said it. But so did JESUS CHRIST. It is the doctrine of the red cap. But it is likewise the doctrine of the red cassock. To men like Professor Huxley the map of Life is crumpled between the convolutions of Darwin's brain: he cannot so much as attack Rousseauism, without unconsciously postulating as his argumentative basis the omnigenous truth of Darwinism.* Now, Individualism was simply Natural Selection applied to the social order.

* *Darwinism.* I have used the word in its looser popular sense. I am, of course, aware that much so included forms no part of Darwin's own teaching. Nor do I mean to impeach the truth of Darwinism (even in this looser sense) within its proper sphere. I simply resent its cool obtrusion upon all matters of thought and life. I resent the arrogant scientist who would make pudding in a dissecting apron, cut it with a *post-mortem* knife, and insist on his guests consuming it with scalpel and forceps. We hear much of the tyranny of the confessor: I would we felt less the tyranny of the professor. Religion and sociology, art

The Individualist theory had its scaffolding of excellence ; oh ! let us confess it. The walls of no theory can rise far from the ground without that. Our neighbours have this in common with Heaven—they help only those who are perfectly able to help themselves. In the days when Individualism held the field, that was a truth. It is now almost a cynicism—a cynicism with the whiff of truth which makes most cynicisms piquant ; but, thank God, fast becoming a cynicism. This was the scaffolding whereby the Individualist edifice arose : the precept, always true within rigid limitations and safeguards, of Self-Help. But, in practice, the script of Self-Help has been the script of selfishness, has been the maxim of Cain ; in practice, Self-Help has meant “ devil take the hindmost.”

For this doctrine of Individualism is the outcome of the proud teaching which declares it despicable for men to bow before their fellow-

and poetry, the trail of his gown is over them all. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam* is so obsolete as to be libellous : the proverb needs change ; make it *Ne professor ultra cadaverem*—let the professor stick to his “ subject.” Time was when the cobbler stitched our philosophies. And on the whole, I prefer him to the professor. The bristle and wax-end are *gey ill* (as the Scots say) for sewing thought on the human mind ; but I do not see that we make better work with the needle and silver-wire.

men. It has meant, not that a man should be individual, but that he should be independent. Now this I take to be an altogether deadly lie. A man *should* be individual, but not independent. The very laws of Nature forbid independence, which have made man in a thousand ways inevitably dependent on his fellows. He who separates his atom of humanity from its fellow-atoms thereby drops from among the agencies of Nature ; since only by chemical combination with his fellows, by reciprocal exertion and acceptance of action can he change, or modify, or produce anything. Independent, he puts forth no influence ; he is sterile as the sands of the desert. The plant may reproduce itself upon itself ; but if you would rise above mere vegetation, or the lowest forms of animal life, there can be no true hermaphroditism ; aye, even in the realm of Mind, "male and female created He them."

Yet in all this I but strike the prostrate. Individualism has its death-blow. It is powerless for aggression, though still powerful for obstruction ; it is dead, and only the unwieldy corpse cumpers our path. Its machine-turned ideals, its bloodless maxims, must give place to those of Christ : "Am I my brother's keeper ?" to "Bear ye one another's burdens." That is

doomed which can unite against itself such divergent forces as the Socialist, the Salvationist, and the Cardinal ; which has for defence but an entrenchment of guinea-bags, manned by the Scientist with a repeating theory. And to those who waver from the assault because the red cap is in the van, I say : “ Go forward fearlessly ; for the red cassock is yet further in the van.”

That is symbolical of much. Red has come to be a colour feared ; it ought rather to be a colour loved. For it is ours. The colour is ours, and what it symbolises is ours. The sectaries came in the night, as we lay asleep, and stole it from us. Many of our garments have they masked in ; never in one more distinctively our own than this. Red in all its grades—from the scarlet of the Sacred College to that imperial colour we call purple, the tinge of clotted blood, which we have fitly made the symbol of the dead Christ—it is ours. Hue of the Princes of the Church ; hue of Martyrs ; hue of sway, and love, and Passion-tide ; ours by divinest heritage ; vesture in which the Proto-Martyr of Freedom hung upon Calvary. To that garb of liberty a Cardinal is proudly lineal ; a Prince of the Blood indeed !

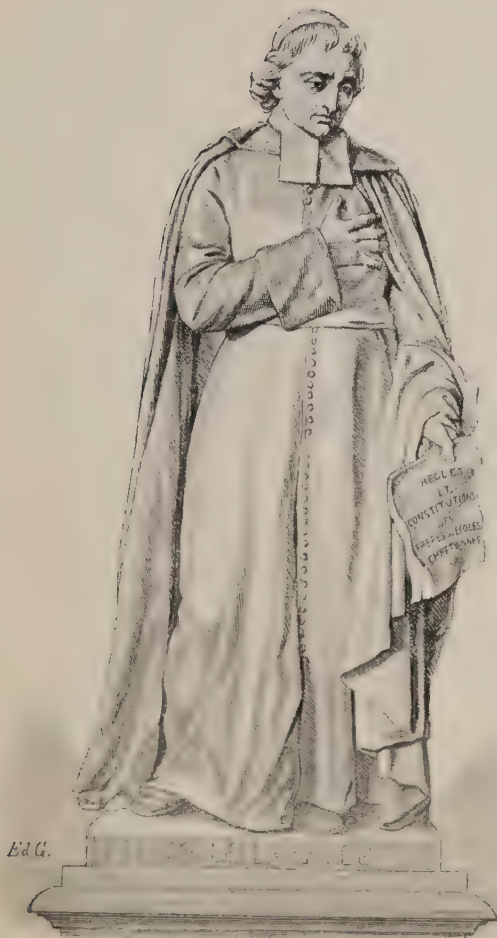
Things are righting themselves. Peradventure

the Revolution freed more than it dreamed, more than it intended. The Church which beat back Cæsarism, which broke the Ghibelline at Canossa, had latterly become an unwilling and patient prisoner of State. Pius VII's was a typical, a figurative captivity : the fetters that fell from him were the last links of the chain which the Cæsars had wound about her whom he represented. The Revolution, which thought to destroy her, delivered her. Yes, she was the most august of the captives who came forth from the Bastille. Now the Church of Hildebrand claims her prescriptive place. She advances to the head of the people. Not against Cæsar, who is no longer the enemy ; not against the rod of iron, which has grown rusty and cumbersome with age : but against that yet wider tyranny of wealth, divorced from conscience and responsibility, which has replaced Cæsar ; against the rod of gold which rules more cruelly than the rod of iron. Nor in assailing capitalism will she assail wealth, more than in assailing Cæsarism she assailed authority. And those of us who, when we have read loud speech concerning "the blushing dawn of Freedom," wondered always with sick hearts whether she blushed for the company in which she found herself, no longer dread lest we should break

the ranks by too impetuous an onset. We have heard the signal from the sagacious Captain in the Vatican, we have heard it tossed across France from Algiers, across America from Philadelphia and Halifax, across the Channel from Capua—very synonym for luxury.*

Vain is the belief that man can convert to permanent evil that which is in itself good. It has been sought to do so with science; and some of us have been seriously frightened at science. Folly! Certain temporary evil has been wrought through it in the present, which seems very great because it *is* present. That will pass, the good will remain; and men will wonder how they with whom was Truth could ever have feared Research. Scientists, those eyeless worms who loosen the soil for the crops of God, have declared that they are proving miracles false, because contrary to the laws of Nature. I can see that in fifty years' time they will have proved miracles true, because based on the laws of Nature. So much good, at least, will come from the researches of Nancy and the Charité, of the followers of Liégeois and the followers of Charcot. If any, being evil, offer to us good things, I say: Take;

* Leo XIII; Cardinal Lavigerie; Archbishop Ryan; Archbishop O'Brien; Cardinal Capeceletro.



*(From the statue in the Courtyard of the
Mother House in Paris)*

for ours must be the ultimate harvest from them. Good steel wins in the hands that can wield it longest ; and those hands are ours.

So, therefore, will it be with Free Education. It is urged by those who dread the Secularists : " Fence it round with limitations as you will, in the long run they will turn it against us." I reply : Fence it round with limitations as *they* will, in the long run it must turn against *them*. Any biassed application of the principle let us fight with every weapon at our command, but the principle itself let us not fear. Were education indeed free, and indeed education, then were half the Social Question solved. No scheme will avail to save more than a fraction—may it be a large fraction !—out of that drift of adult misery wherewith the iniquitous neglect of our forefathers has encumbered the streets. But the children ! There is the chance ; there, alas, also is the fear. Think of it. If Christ stood amidst your London slums, He could not say : " Except ye become as *these* little children." Far better your children were cast from the bridges of London, than they should become as those little ones. Could they be gathered together and educated in the truest sense of the word ; could the children of the nation at large

be so educated as to cut off future recruits to the ranks of Darkest England ; then it would need no astrology to cast the horoscope of to-morrow. “ *La tête de l’homme du peuple,*” nay rather *de l’enfant du peuple*, around *that* sways the conflict. Who grasps the child, grasps the future.

The grim old superstition was right. When man would build to a lasting finish, he must found his building over a child. There is not a secret society in Europe, there is not a secularist in France, in Germany, in Italy, in England, but knows it : everywhere these gangs of coiners are at their work of stamping and uttering base humanity. We, too, have recognised it ; we on our part have not been idle, we Catholics least of all ; but we are hard put to it for labourers in the task. Here, in the Brothers of the Christian Schools, we have an instrument to hand. Here, in our midst, are the men who founded Free Education, who clung to it, who suffered for it, when all that now trumpet it cried against it ; who withstood in its defence equally the *doctrinaires* of the Revolution and the *doctrinaires* of the Restoration ; who are now beholding the wisdom of the world late justifying the wisdom of the Saint.

POSTSCRIPT :

By one who watches the Christian
Schools.

THE following is a summary of the chief events in the history of the Brothers since this Life of the Saint was written.

On January 1st, 1897, Br. Joseph died after a Generalship of thirteen years. A special feature of his influence was the development of Perseverance Societies for young men who have just completed their studies. He had an extraordinary ascendancy over such young men. Never did a young man hold intercourse with him without feeling a fresh impulse for good. It was also during his period of office that the now flourishing De la Salle Training College of Waterford, Ireland, saw its humble beginnings.

Br. Joseph was succeeded by Br. Gabriel whose election took place in March, 1897. The latter has had the consolation of witnessing the final processes of the canonization of the Holy Founder. This act of the Church at the close of the nineteenth century was specially significant. For it glorified the work in the person of the worker, and held out to the world a model of true devotedness to the cause of civilisation and progress amongst the children of the people. To the great Pope Leo XIII was given the privilege of thus conferring the highest honours

of the Church on the Founder of Popular Education.

In this world, however, great joy is but a prelude to sorrow. The Brothers had still fresh in their memories the thrilling scenes connected with the canonization when orders were given by the "authorities" for their expulsion from France, their mother-country. Yet this act of a hostile government has only served to make the Institute more Catholic. The worthy Superior-General faced the storm with a calmness which the Spirit of Faith alone could impart. He made provision for the opening of schools in foreign countries; many were the touching spectacles of bands of Brothers, young and old, facing the hardships of exile rather than renounce their noble calling.

The manner in which the Brothers adapt themselves to the requirements of the situation furnishes a striking illustration of the fact that the Catholicity of the Church is something more than a mere title. To whatever nation a Brother may be sent he immediately sets himself to the task of training up citizens loyal to their country because they are loyal to their conscience.

Though this is but a very abridged sketch of the work of the Institute founded by St. John Baptist de la Salle, it would be incomplete without some reference to the schools conducted by the Brothers in the colonies and foreign countries. All our statesmen recognise the importance of a system of education in harmony with present needs, but very few are sufficiently acquainted with the work widely attempted by the Brothers. All admit that the schools of the

Empire can be made powerful aids in the cultivation of loyalty. It would be well, therefore, that something more were done to encourage those who have the self-sacrifice to devote their lives to this task. The Brothers do not seek their reward in this life, but they need patronage and even pecuniary assistance for the carrying out of their schemes. We should like to induce the members of the "League of the Empire," and others interested in their work to give this subject their attention.

Apart from the actual lessons given in their schools, the moral influence of the Brothers aids powerfully in inculcating love of duty and respect for law and order. The evidence of the Governors of the various Colonies in which the Brothers have schools is conclusive on this matter. In the Far East their Institutions may be met with in Ceylon, Burmah, the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States, and Hong Kong. In all these places the respective Governors or Lieutenant-Governors have borne public testimony to the excellence of their work. Another impartial tribunal is the Board of Examiners for the University Local Examinations. In these tests the Brothers' schools have to compete with those specially equipped and endowed by Government, yet they lead in the results. The schools of Penang and Singapore have won many scholarships offered by Government to enable deserving students to complete their education in the Universities of the British Isles. In all these schools local scholarships and prizes have been carried off by their pupils.

Perhaps a still better estimate of their influence

may be made by the consideration of the fact that of the twelve schools under their charge in those Colonies and Dependencies, four have an average attendance of about 1,000 pupils. In most of these schools also orphans and abandoned children, who would otherwise be left on the street, the school of vice and crime, are educated with but scanty aid from Government or other sources. Their schools of Canada have perhaps even a brighter record ; and the budding Institutions in South Africa and Australia have already established a reputation.

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